



# The Bell

November, 2023

Monthly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

## **WE'VE COME A LONG WAY BUT THERE'S STILL WORK TO BE DONE**

By Lynda Butek

When you think about it, we have come a very long way since the dark days of 2019-2022. We weathered the Covid pandemic. Sure, we were closed for in-person worship for part of that time, but we fared much better than many churches, some of which never opened again to in-person worship. We learned how to navigate our way around Zoom. We were fortunate to have dedicated guest pastors who kept us on the straight and narrow and dedicated volunteers who kept the church running and functioning even without a pastor. But all that is behind us. It's time to move forward.

With Pastor Ed Williams at the helm, the church is once again resuming its place in the community. Many of the church teams have resumed their regular meetings and functions. Our Wednesday night suppers have started up again, albeit only once a month, but it's a start with the promise of more to come. The choir although small is back on a limited basis. The Food Pantry continues to provide meals for the needy. And the need grows but that's one of the reasons we are here "in the city for good."

While the growth of our programs is a blessing, it comes with a cost and that is something we have to address sooner rather than later.

Costs of everything have risen – from gas to groceries to health care and utilities. I know they have grown for you as they have for our family. And they have grown for the church too. We have cut our expenses to the bone. Presbyterian Women and Presbyterian Men have stepped up to help with finances but we still are in need. And we need everyone's help.

Many of us, me included, have continued to give to the church but not many of us, again me included, have increased our contributions from where they were in 2019. Now is the time to take a close, hard look at those contributions in light of what the church is doing and wants to do in the future.

Pastor Ed has big plans for the church. He has vowed to increase our membership. And we are moving in that direction. He has brought in new guests and people we haven't seen for far too long. He is trying new things, some of which work, a few of which don't. But he keeps trying. His enthusiasm is infectious.

Pastor Ed needs us and our contributions to continue to do what needs to be done in the community. We have waited so long for him and the faith he has shown in us. We can't let him down because if we do we aren't holding up our end of the deal. It's time – past time – to GIVE.

## **SESSION SCHEDULES CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

The annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 10 immediately following service.

The purpose of this meeting will be to elect new leaders to serve on Session, the Board of Deacons, Financial Review and the Endowment Fund Board. Those positions are still being firmed up and the entire slate of nominees will be sent to you via EBell later this month in accordance with our church by-laws.

## **PRESBYTERIAN MEN PAY FOR RAMP REPAIR**

After many years of wear and tear, the cement on our main ramp developed holes and buckled where the sections meet. These imperfections had become hazardous to those of us using that ramp and the time came to repair the cement.

Presbyterian Men solicited bids from contractors and decided on Advanced Concrete in Mondovi to do the work. Fortunately they were able to start in mid-October so the ramp has been repaired and the bill for almost \$1000 paid by PM.

## **FPC SCHEDULES CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

The traditional Christmas Eve service is scheduled to begin at 4:30 on Sunday December 24. Pastor Ed will be speaking that day. The service will include traditional scriptures, holiday music, communion, candles and blessing of the food for the Food Pantry.

Since Christmas Eve morning falls on Sunday this year, there will be a joint Methodist-Presbyterian service at Trinity United Methodist Church held by Rev. Eddie Crise and Ed Williams.

On Christmas morning, Agnes' Table will host a brunch in Fellowship Hall. The community will be invited.

## **PLAN YOUR HOLIDAY DECORATING**

It's time to order your poinsettias for Christmas. As we have done in the past, the plants will decorate the chancel on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning and then be available for the donors to take home to enjoy through the holidays. The poinsettia order form appears in this month's Bell.

## **SHOPPING FOR OTHERS**

While you are shopping for your own holiday cooking and baking, consider adding the things on this year's Reverse Advent Calendar to your list. The list has been slightly revised and appears in this month's Bell and is also at the Welcome Desk in the Narthex.

# POINSETTIAS

We are now taking orders for poinsettias that will grace the chancel area this Christmas season. The cost is **\$9.00** per plant. Please fill out the order form. Return to the church office with your payment as soon as possible. Submit your order:

- 1) during office hours (9 to 2:00) Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays)
- 2) by mailing to the church
- 3) or, put order and payment in offering plate on Sunday

(Remember to write "poinsettia" in memo blank on your check.)

The plants may be picked up after the Christmas Eve service. Of the plants not picked up, some will be saved for the following Sunday and others distributed in the community.

-----  
I want to purchase (how many) \_\_\_\_\_ poinsettias for display in our church chancel during the Advent/Christmas weekend.

I would like designation(s) in the church bulletin to read:

In Memory of:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_

In Appreciation for:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_

In Celebration of:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_

(other title) \_\_\_\_\_:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_

From:

\_\_\_\_\_

Return to:	First Presbyterian Church	Phone: 723-5717	Amount Paid \$ _____
	130 West Central Street		CK#
	Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin 54729-2345		Cash

## **HAM LOAF DINNER RETURNS IN NOVEMBER**

The much-awaited ham loaf dinner prepared by Presbyterian Women will be served on November 8 from 4:30 to 6:30. The menu will include ham loaf, potatoes, vegetable, roll, beverage and dessert for \$12.

## **BETTER LATE THAN NEVER**

Pastor Ed Williams has been with us for almost a year without officially being installed as our pastor but that is about to change.

As a Commissioned Ruling Elder, Ed doesn't really have to be "installed" since that was taken care of by the Presbytery last spring when he received his commission. However, the installation is something we want to do to show our appreciation of what he is doing for us.

The service will take place on Saturday, December 9 in the sanctuary at 11 AM and is in the process of being planned by the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery. Watch for the EBell with more information.

## **SESSION SETS 2024 COMMUNION SCHEDULE**

The Session has decided on communion dates for the coming year. They are:

January 7	First Sunday, Epiphany and Baptism of the Lord
February 4	First Sunday
February 14	Ash Wednesday
March 3	First Sunday
March 28	Maundy Thursday
March 31	Easter
April 7	First Sunday
May 5	First Sunday
May 19	Pentecost
June 2	First Sunday
July 7	First Sunday
August 4	First Sunday
September 1	First Sunday
October 6	First Sunday and World Communion Sunday
November 3	First Sunday
December 1	First Sunday
December 24	Christmas Eve

The only major change is that we are adding Maundy Thursday which will be an ecumenical service held jointly with Trinity United and Christ Episcopal Churches in our sanctuary.



# Reverse Advent Calendar

Each day add an item to a box or bag.

**On Christmas Eve bring the bag or box to church to be blessed and given to the food pantry.**

- December 1-box of cereal
- December 2-peanut butter
- December 3-cookies
- December 4-boxed potatoes
- December 5-macaroni and cheese
- December 6-cans of pears
- December 7-canned tomatoes (diced)
- December 8-canned tuna
- December 9-bag of chips
- December 10-can of Beef Ravioli
- December 11-canned fruit cocktail
- December 12-peaches
- December 13-canned chicken
- December 14-box of crackers
- December 15-package of rice
- December 16-can of green beans
- December 17-package of pasta
- December 18-spaghetti sauce
- December 19-can of chicken noodle soup
- December 20-can of tomato soup
- December 21-can of corn
- December 22-can of beef stew
- December 23-spaghetti noodles
- December 24-3 rolls of toilet paper